



297 NE 67 Street, Miami, FL 33138
305.576.8570 | info@locustprojects.org | www.locustprojects.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Locust Projects presents
PROJECT ROOM:
Johanna Strobel:
A Bought Kingdom

Exhibition Dates:
April 18 – June 13, 2026

Exhibition Private Premier:
Saturday, April 18 | 7-10pm
*Spring Fling: Margaritaville
with a Twist - Annual
Fundraiser* - [Buy tickets](#)

Public Hours:
Tuesday to Saturday |
11am-5pm

MEDIA CONTACT: Sid Wolf
414-313-6434

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A Bought Kingdom

From the Space Coast's race to the stars to Disney's manufactured paradise – a new exhibition contemplates the extinction of the Dusky Seaside Sparrow



Johanna Strobel, Still from *Chasing Dawn, Dusk Passed*.

[Miami, FL] Locust Projects presents *A Bought Kingdom*, a newly commissioned multi-media installation for Locust's 625-sq ft Project Room by Johanna Strobel. The exhibition is the artist's first major solo exhibition in the United States and premieres during Locust Projects Annual Spring Fling Fundraiser on Saturday, April 18 and remains on view through June 13, 2026.

Strobel's project, a Knight Digital Commission, brings to light the extinction of the Dusky Seaside Sparrow—driven by pesticide use and habitat destruction tied to the development of the Kennedy Space Center on Florida's Merritt Island in the 1960s.

Presented in Locust Projects' Project Room, the installation draws inspiration from Disney animations and attractions. Visitors are invited to sit on benches beneath perch-like sculptures suspended from the ceiling, featuring bird-shaped wax forms slightly evoking Disney's *Enchanted Tiki Room*. Described by the artist as sculptural timepieces, each work incorporates a bird and egg form made of wax that slowly melts, hardens, and re-melts. As the wax gradually evaporates with

each cycle, the process accelerates until the material is depleted and the cycle ceases—serving as a metaphor for fragile and finite natural systems

Within this environment, visitors encounter a Disney-inspired animated video narrated by Orange Band, a charming, singing bird and the last Dusky Seaside Sparrow. Told from Orange Band's perspective, the story unfolds as a musical—echoing the classic animated films while revealing a darker narrative. The film recounts the sparrow's once-thriving salt marsh habitat and its decline due to DDT use in the

1950s and 1960s, which disrupted reproduction, followed by the flooding of its ecosystem for mosquito control around the new Kennedy Space Center. It traces the capture of the final remaining birds in 1979 and their relocation to a failed captive breeding program at Walt Disney World's Discovery Island, culminating in Orange Band's death in 1987 and the species' official extinction in 1990.



While grounded in historical fact, Strobel frames the work not as a documentary, but as a fable—meditating on time, change, beauty, loss, and longing in a world shaped, and often devastated, by human intervention in the name of progress.

Upon exit, visitors can purchase a comic book and a souvenir t-shirt that says, "*The Dusky Seaside Sparrow went extinct at Disney World and all I did was get this lousy T-shirt.*"

A Bought Kingdom was selected from online Open Call for the Project Room in 2023 from more than 474 applicants online and was coordinated by Locust Projects' artist co-founder Elizabeth Withstandley. The 2023 Project Room Open Call review panel included: past exhibiting artists R. Eric McMaster (2022) and Felice Grodin (2014), and local curator Dainy Tapia (Creator and Curator of ArtSeen365).

The exhibition is accompanied by a publication designed and illustrated by the artist and published by EXILE with texts by Lorie Mertes, and Alexandro Segade, an interview with the artist by Ursula Ströbele and a libretto by the artist.

The exhibition is a Knight Digital Commission.

Image: Johanna Strobel, Rendering for *A Bought Kingdom*.



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ABOUT THE ARTIST

Johanna Strobel is a German-born, New York-based, interdisciplinary artist whose practice investigates the intersections of ecology, technology, and human intervention through sculpture, video, and installation. Her work often explores the fragility of natural and constructed systems, examining themes of transformation, extinction, and the temporal nature of existence.

Strobel has exhibited internationally at institutions and galleries in Germany, Italy, Austria, Taiwan, Korea, Canada, and the US, including at the Neues Museum Nuremberg; Bundeskunsthalle, Bonn; Museum Gunzenhauser, Chemnitz; Kunstverein Munich; Institute for Modern Art, Nuremberg; Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin; NADA House, New York; and NARS Foundation, Brooklyn.

Strobel was a fellow of the Program for the Realization of Equal Opportunities for Women in Research and Teaching of the State of Bavaria and a member of NEW INC, the New Museum's cultural incubator (New York). She is a member of Mensa International, and a TEDx speaker. She holds parallel degrees in Information Science and Mathematics from the University of Regensburg, Germany and graduated with Honors in Painting and Graphics from the Academy of Fine Arts Munich, Germany. In 2020 she received an MFA in New Genres from Hunter College New York where she currently teaches.

ABOUT LOCUST PROJECTS

Founded by artists for artists in 1998, Locust Projects is Miami's longest running nonprofit alternative art space. We produce, present, and nurture ambitious and experimental new art and the exchange of ideas through commissioned exhibitions and projects, artist residencies, summer art intensives for teens, and public programs on contemporary art and curatorial practice. As a leading incubator of new art and ideas, Locust Projects emphasizes boundary-pushing creative endeavors, risk-taking and experimentation by local, national, and international artists. We invest in South Florida's arts community by providing artists with access to visiting artists and curators, incubator project grants, and empower creative careers by supporting the administrative work of being an artist through professional development resources.

The exhibition is a Knight Digital Commission.

Locust Projects 25-26 season of exhibitions are supported, in part, with major support from: The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation; The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts; The Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs and the Cultural Affairs Council, the Miami-Dade County Mayor and Board of County Commissioners; the State of Florida through the Division of Arts and Culture and the National Endowment for the Arts; The Jorge M. Pérez Family Foundation at The Miami Foundation; Robert Moss; Diane and Werner Grob; Susan and Richard Arregui; VIA Art Fund; María Bechily and Scott Hodes; Sarah Arison / Arison Arts Foundation; Vivant Skincare; The WEGE Foundation; Funding Arts Network; Hillsdale Fund; Cowles Foundation, Kirk Foundation; and the INCUBATORS.

